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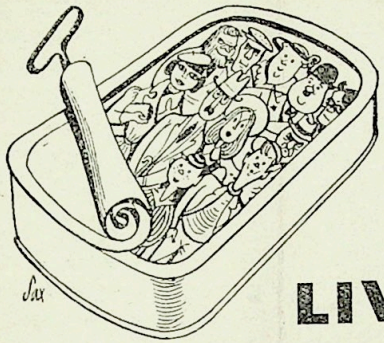

LIVING IN CROWDS

W. J. H. Sprott and A. H. Stewart

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MAN MASS-PRODUCED?

There was a sequence in "Modern Times" where Charlie Chaplin enters a great factory and finds himself put to work on a moving belt. A large spanner in each hand, he has to tighten two screws on an anonymous chassis as it moves in front of him, one chassis after another, screws after screws, twist after twist with each arm. And then a moment comes when Charlie Chaplin is called away from the belt. He turns round sharply and walks off, his hands still holding their spanners and twisting imaginary screws in the air in front of him.

In our modern times, many millions of us walk away from our jobs still mentally twisting our spanners, walk away to our mass-produced homes or our mass-produced entertainments. For we live, the great bulk of us, in vast societies where life is worked out for the million. Inevitably this kind of society raises new problems for the individual, problems of loneliness, of frustration and anxiety, of struggle for recognition and of the need for personal expression and satisfaction.

That is the gloomy side of the picture. But also mass society provides opportunities for far more people than in the past. Education, popular art, travel, domestic comforts, the film itself, are all features of this "living in crowds". Our two authors have carefully balanced one against the other, the loss against the gain. But the final calculation is for each of us individually, in the kind of lives we lead.

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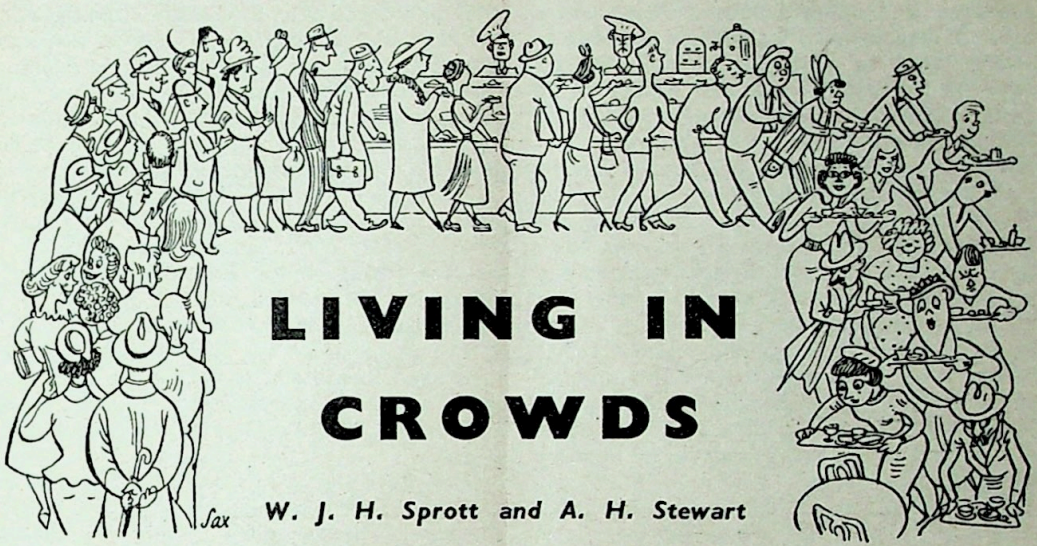

LIVING IN CROWDS

W. J. H. Sprott and A. H. Stewart

1.

OUR MASS SOCIETY

What is a " mass society " ? In the first place, of course, it means that there are a great many of us. The population of the United Kingdom is estimated to be just over 50 million, of whom over 43 million live in England and Wales. This means that the population has much more than doubled since 1851, when 22 million people lived in the U.K., and just under 18 million lived in England and Wales. We are thick on the ground, too. In 1939 the density of the population of England alone was 766 per square mile, compared with 197 per square mile in France, and 43 per square mile in the United States of America. Again, most of us live in cities. In 1931 only 20 per cent. of the population was classed as " rural " and about two-fifths of the whole population lived in the great " conurbations " of London, Greater Manchester, Greater Birmingham, Merseyside, Glasgow, West Yorkshire and Tyneside.

A " mass society " also seems to show an increasing degree of uniformity, so that the great majority of people tend to live in much the same way, with the same sort of interests and standards. The differences between social groups at work or at leisure are constantly being broken down. Mass production, for instance, means that the same simple operations, button-pushing or screw-tightening, may be the basis of a dozen different trades ; craftsmen's jobs are broken up into these simple components, and many more people lose their pride in their work. Taxation and rationing do not allow much variation in standards of living ; mass entertainment, newspapers and the wireless establish common interests and tastes. Here is a list of familiar things ; in what ways do they illustrate the tendencies described above ? Wembley Stadium, Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd., Woolworth's, the Transport and General Workers' Union, the circulation of the *News of the World*, the audience for Itma, Blackpool on August Bank Holiday. (Think up further examples, too.)

Size and uniformity, however, are not the only distinguishing features of a " mass society". In the past a comparatively small number of people were important. They had

economic and political power. They had a sense of responsibility for running the country —they were the governing class. The rest were the " masses "—men and women of all sorts : professionals, shop-keepers, skilled and unskilled working people, and anyone else who was not a member of the " governing class". Now the whole position has changed. The so-called " masses " have woken up and have become important in a way they never were before. Instead of acknowledging a paternal governing class, who look after our affairs, leaving us to carry on our lives in our own corners without bothering about things which do not concern us, we are all conscious of our membership of the community to which we belong. We have become vocal, we make claims, and we demand a say in the way we are ruled.

The most important thing that has happened is that the classes of society who were least considered in the old days have now become the dominant power in the State. The danger, as we shall see, is that the spontaneous small-scale social units that used to be found in the old days either get enlarged so that they lose their personal character, or get smothered by large-scale organization from the top.

Greater chances for all

This shift of emphasis in society cannot be summed up as wholly good or wholly bad. To the credit side is the increase of social justice. The " masses " are no longer dumb and impotent ; they can voice their demands and they have the political power to get them satisfied. The result is a fairer distribution of educational opportunities, a fairer distribution of wealth, and the provision of social services for those who cannot afford to pay for them. Furthermore, it would be false to pretend that this advance in social justice was wrung by force from a frightened bourgeoisie. Without the political power, the trade union organizations and the increased bargaining power of the workers in a time of shortage of labour, no doubt the advance in social justice would not have been made so quickly. But the presence of so many people suffering from disabilities has caused uneasy consciences among those more happily placed. The " masses " have demanded their " rights "; but the fortunate few have recognized that the demand is justified and this has hastened the process. It is important that this wide-spread sense of social justice should be remembered, because it is very often forgotten in an age given to cynicism ; it is, after all, one of the brighter aspects of our " mass society".

With this advance in social justice has come a change in the governing class. From Tudor times until the eighteenth century, the people of influence and power were the landed gentry and the merchants, and in the nineteenth century, the middle classes who were engaged in business and industry achieved first economic power and then political leadership. The twentieth century, however, has seen an even more radical change in the composition of the ruling class, for our leaders today include many men and women from the " working class " and the lower middle class.

Leadership in our society does not depend entirely on Parliament and politics. The governing class includes such people as the managers or directors of great industrial and financial undertakings, the owners of news-papers, the dignitaries of the churches, and influential writers, artists and scientists. It is likely that, just as the extension of social justice has changed our political leadership, so the extension of educational opportunity will produce changes in the composition and influence of this wider " élite".

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2.

THE OLD WORLD AND THE NEW

The dangers and problems which attend "mass society" are formidable. They can best be seen if we contrast the present social structure with a very different one. Picture to yourself a society where there is, for instance, a well-established hierarchy of classes, in which each man's wealth corresponds to his position; where people live in small-scale groups, and are in constant personal contact; and where there is a strong and uniform tradition of conduct to guide everyone according to his place in the social scale.

English society was never entirely like this but it was much more like this before the Industrial Revolution than after it. George Sturt, in *Change in the Village*, observes many survivals of this old way of life and so helps us to imagine what it must have been like to live in an England of small agricultural communities. He speaks of the villagers' acceptance—even at the end of the nineteenth century—of their station in life:

> Being born to poverty and the labouring life, they accept the position as if it were entirely natural. Of course it has its drawbacks; but they suppose it takes all sorts to make a world, and since they are of the labouring sort they must make the best of it. With this simple philosophy they have contrived hitherto to meet their troubles calmly, not blaming other people for them unless in individual cases, and hardly dreaming of translating them into social injustice. . . . Against the rich man, therefore, the labourers have no sort of animosity. If he will spend money freely, the richer he is the better.

The power to face poverty with contentment Sturt ascribes partly to the Christian tradition and partly to the peasant tradition "which permitted a man to hope for well-being without seeking to escape from his own class into some other." This "well-being" he describes later as founded on richness of experience—"pride of skill in handicrafts, detailed understanding of the soil and its materials, the general effect of the well-known landscape and a faint sense of something venerable in its associations"—and to the sense of belonging that marks members of a small and intimate community.

There was, too, an "unwritten code—a sort of *savoir vivre*—which became part of the rural labourer's outlook and instructed him through the days and years. . . . And it was consistent with—indeed, it implied—many strong virtues: toughness to endure long labour, hardiness, frugality, habits of early rising. It was consistent, too—that must be admitted—with considerable hardness and coarseness of feeling. A man might be avaricious, loose, dirty, quarrelsome, and not offend much against the essential peasant's code."

G. M. Trevelyan, writing of the seventeenth century in his *English Social History*, adds support to this view when he says: "There was much hardship, poverty and cold in those pleasant villages and farms, but the simplicity and the beauty of the life with nature was an historical reality and not merely a poet's dream."

In such a society a limit is set to ambition, and it is hardly possible for anyone to aim at a higher station in life than that to which he was born. In such a society the family, the village, the small workshop at once sustain and control their members. The family is a consolidated body, the village or small town is a place where a man may feel at home, where he has his place with appropriate personal relations with those "above" and "below" him. The small workshop provides personal relations in and out of working hours, so that a man may feel that he "matters" to the other members of the group and therefore that the group to which he belongs "matters" to him.

Finally, in such a society the power of accepted tradition is so strong that its members know at once what they must do. There are appropriate duties for every rank and the pressure of public opinion is strong enough to reinforce the sense of duty where it conflicts with immediate desire. The whole life of the community, the processes by which it lived and flourished, and the interdependence of its members, were manifest to all who lived in this "coherent and self-explanatory village life".

In this society composed mainly of small rural communities the influence of the "squirearchy" was all-pervasive. As landowners they had a profound and direct influence, for good or evil, on the prosperity of their communities; as justices of the peace they administered the law according to their prejudices; they organized and took the lead in the country entertainments; they were the main sources of charity; they set standards of splendour which were vicariously enjoyed by their tenants, who liked to see the lord of the manor "keeping up his position".

Squire Allworthy in Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Addison's *Sir Roger de Coverley* represent the piety and paternalism of the squirearchy at its best, though they were perhaps as much above the average as Fielding's Squire Western was below it; and the code of manners of the gentry class as a whole was important enough to give a special significance to the word "gentleman" in the English vocabulary. The more cultivated of the gentry were also patrons of art, science and literature, and as such they set standards of taste and enlightenment which characterize the art of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Their position forced them into local and national leadership so that they developed a tradition of public office as a duty, though no doubt they took a narrow view of their responsibilities. This view, however, broadened as the gentry became associated with the rising middle class. A combination of self-interest and philanthropy led the industrialist to attack the bad rural housing provided by the gentry, and the gentry to attack the exploitation of child labour in the factories. It can, of course, be argued that class interests were uppermost, but the record of social reform in the nineteenth century must also be credited to the sense of public duty which was rooted in both the aristocratic and Christian traditions.

The complicated processes which are collectively known as the "Industrial Revolution" practically wiped away all trace of such a society. For some time the balance was held. Successful business men were absorbed into the landed gentry, and enterprising members of the working class joined the ranks of the bourgeoisie. Class differences were sharpened, but only because the barriers which separated class from class were no longer impassable. At the same time, the "masses" were kept in their "place" because they were too poor, too ill-educated, and too unorganized to get out of it. The threat of unemployment reinforced such sense of duty as remained.

Now all is changed. The old hierarchy is no longer accepted, and the styles of life which mark out one class from another are becoming more and more uniform. This means that the limited range of ambitions open to any particular class has been replaced by unlimited possibilities. Another difference is that a man no longer spends the greater part of his life in personal contact with people whom he knows personally and who know him; he has impersonal relations with large-scale enterprises which cater for various aspects of his fragmented existence. Of course he has his personal friends, but they tend to be his friends and not "friends of the family". Lastly, the undermining of accepted tradition permits him to ask the formidable question: "Why should I . . . ?"

3.

THREE PROBLEMS OF MASS SOCIETY

The dangers and problems of mass society at the present time may be discussed from three angles. First, the increasing size and complexity of our society makes it much more difficult to organize and control. This we might call the problem of scale. Secondly, this increase in scale produces frustrations for us as individuals which greatly influence our conduct. This is the problem of the individual. Thirdly, as a result of the breakdown of the

tradition which formerly helped us to meet these problems of conduct, we now have to think out afresh what are our individual duties and responsibilities to society. This is the problem of values.

I. The problem of scale

We have already discussed the size of the community—increasing all the time within its fixed frontiers. We have also noted that this large community is not broken up into small self-contained groups ; it is rather made up of individuals, many of whom are members of nation-wide associations and all of whom are conscious of the pressure of government regulations from the centre. Some indication of the way in which state organization has developed may be given if we look at the increase in the non-industrial staff of the Civil Service. In 1938 there were 362,800, during the war the number rose to 710,600 in 1943, and in 1948 it was 693,400.

The organization of the community on much more of a "nation-wide" basis has been accompanied by the enlargement of the associations to which people belong. Many of the trade unions, for example, are enormous concerns. The A.E.U. in 1941 had 454,126 members and 1,397 branches. The N.U.R. in 1940 had 364,321 members in 1,611 branches. The total number of unions in 1931 was 1,108 with 4,624,000 members in all ; in 1946 there were 753 unions with a total membership of 8,714,000. If we look back a hundred years to 1851 we find the Amalgamated Society of Engineers with 5,000 members, and that was the largest union in that year. What is the effect for the individual member ? Were his interests better catered for in a smaller, more select group ?

Of course, there is power in numbers, and greater efficiency ; but at the same time it means that effective decisions are made at the centre, remote from the local branches, so that a distinction between the officials and the "rank and file" develops. Indeed the officials often have to explain the policy of the union to the local members, who find their own affairs somehow linked up with a lot of other considerations which have no immediate interest to them at all. The danger is that the union becomes just another bureaucratic organization that orders you about. The spontaneous, warm sociability which was a characteristic of the Friendly Societies in the old days is not to be found in the impersonal large-scale trade union.

And what of the "consumer", the man who comes into contact with the bureaucratic machines ? Even at the lowest level the official wields a degree of power over the consumer. The official is backed by the organization he represents, he can identify himself with it, he often has to deal with people of the same "class" as himself, but from a superior vantage point. What wonder that he sometimes seizes his opportunity to make himself felt ? Perhaps it is his only chance, because in other walks of life he is an anonymous consumer, too.

But the "consumer" is a consumer in a more obvious sense than merely a member of the queue waiting his turn at the desk where the official is separated from him by a wire fence. Modern methods of mass-production have raised the standard of life of the "masses". Machines can the same sort of food into the same sort of tin, they cut out the same sort of suit in thousands of units, and they stamp out the same sort of house, the same sort of furniture, and the same sort of domestic utensils. It is a boon, but is it always a blessing ? It is obvious that it would be wasteful deliberately to make everything different, and in any case if we did there would not be enough to go round. It is also obvious that there are a great many things which could be conveniently standardized—nuts, bolts, plugs, saucepans and so forth, but the extraordinary thing is that in many such cases standardization has not been achieved.

Too much standardization ?

In such things as clothes, furniture and food, however, we cannot help wondering whether standardization has not caused us to miss something. It is not that our needs are ignored. Market research, with the latest statistical safeguards, tries to discover our tastes so that industry can satisfy them, and movements are afoot to improve design so as to influence our taste. No one can deny that—at any rate to our way of thinking —utility furniture is in design an improvement on the shoddy stuff that was being offered for hire-purchase not so very long ago.

But such things must be mass-produced, and the stamp of accurate manufacture is upon them : they have not the individuality

of the craftsman's work. The question arises : shall we lose the taste for variety ? Standard brands of food and drink mean a saving of labour, but do we not miss the agreeable differences between one home-made pot of marmalade and another, between the blend of tea one used to get at one's little shop and the blend provided by another expert ?

The business enterprises, or many of them at any rate, have tended to grow larger. It is not easy to get figures which are up to date and informative on this subject because the last Census of Production came out in 1935, and the material is complicated by the fact that several firms may be controlled as one unit. It is true that there are a great many firms which employ under 500 persons apiece, but over half the persons employed in 1935 worked for firms employing over 500 persons. The large units were characteristic of coal mining, railway transport, steel production, the aircraft trades and the manufacture of tobacco and biscuits. Besides this we must remember that such large units as Dorman Long & Co., Vickers, Ltd., Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd., and the Co-operative Wholesale Society, Ltd., have a controlling interest in several trades. " Lever Brothers, for instance, in 1937 controlled 44 firms engaged in productive activity, these firms employing 47,450 persons in all in that year". (Leak and Maizels : *The Structure of British Industry*—Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, 1945, p. 160.)

When we come to public corporations we have the Coal Board employing over 700,000 persons, while in railway services alone there are over 300,000 employees.

All this network of organization in state services, in associations and in industry, has been made possible by improved methods of communication : telephone, wireless, telegraph, motor cars, and by improved technique of management. It all makes for efficiency, no doubt, but such an elaborate organization has its weaknesses. In state organizations, decisions may be made in Whitehall which are inappropriate in the eyes of the man " on the spot", and this is more likely to be so the more the state undertakes, unless some way of decentralizing control is discovered. In the associations to which we belong, the larger they are the farther off they are from our immediate interests, and the longer it takes to get anything settled. In industry the employee

The question arises : shall we lose the taste for variety ?

may be affected by the impersonality of it all, but we shall have to say something about this later. There is, however, an inescapable problem set by the fact that industries differ in their importance. Some of them, such as coal and steel, are key industries, which means that those in control of such industries have the power to hold the community up to ransom in a way which is out of the question for the makers of mouth-organs.

Finally we must note the fact that the more centralized and organized everything is the easier it is for a small section of the community to get control of the administrative machinery. This is made possible, of course, by the development of modern arms and modern means of controlling and swaying opinion; never have so few been able to wield so much power with so small a number of implements. We shall see that in "mass society" a dictatorship is not only technically possible but may even be welcome.

2. The individual's predicament

Let us consider, for example, a manual worker. At work he is a "hand", in his trade union he is one of the rank and file, at the big shop he is a customer, at the food office he is a ration book, at the labour exchange he is an unemployed person or a trainee, at the Post Office he is an "insured person" or an "old age pensioner", and to the State he is a number on a card mis-called "identity". Even at home he may be thrown back upon himself. Who is interested in what he said to the foreman, or how he felt when he got up and wondered whether his missus would throw in his face what he said the night before?

Apart from a few friends who shift and change with changing employments, he might be surrounded by robots who pay him, dole him, register him, sign him on or off, and hand him his sick pay or old age pension when he pushes a bit of paper over the counter. Even in his trade union, which he regards as intimately concerned with his personal conditions of work and pay, the member of the rank and file feels unable to make personal contact with the people who really make the important decisions.

The manual worker is in no very different case from the housewife, the clerk and everyone else. We all, in varying degrees and in important parts of our lives, cease to be persons and become numbers in files or vague human shapes proffering forms and papers to people who do not know us and whom we do not know.

At the same time there is ambition. "Why shouldn't I . . . ?" "You've got to look after number one, no one else will." The welfare of the State? How can anyone be expected to think seriously of a de-personalized collectivity? Let's get what we can while the going's good. "Look at old so-and-so . . ." "But it's all very well, not everyone has the luck of old so-and-so—perhaps one might win a thousand on the pools and that doesn't come off—Sheffield Wednesday's let you down again." And so it goes on, everyone looking for his chance in the scramble, by fair means, foul means, and off-white. The movement towards equality which is a distinctive feature of our democracy has the paradoxical effect of intensifying competition for minor or marginal advantages, a little more money than others, a smart deal in the black or grey market.

In the struggle the standard of success is raised. There is no nonsense about a "modest pittance suitable for the likes of me." The advertisements in newspapers, the standards of luxury suggested by the cinema, the publicity given to the doings of the successful in the Press, stimulate the imagination and the appetite. There is an ever-increasing range of what you "can't do without".

Symptoms of discomfort

And so we are unhappy. Of course, this must not be taken to mean that everyone is miserable all the time. We have our families and our friends, but there are widespread symptoms of discomfort and restlessness, of which an almost obsessive seeking after pleasure, while we can get it, is one. To be really happy a person needs a sense of independent significance, and the chance to co-operate with his fellows in the pursuit of some end outside his own immediate personal satisfactions. That is one of the reasons why a great many people got a "kick" out of the war. There were small groups with clear objectives and every member felt he counted. In peacetime our felt significance is diminished, and the projects and plans in which we are invited to play our part are too large and too vague and too far off for us to have much sense of participation. The result is that nearly all

of us have to develop compensating devices to help us along.

Ambition, showing off, anti-social conduct, an uneasy anxiety about our importance, a safe-guarding attitude about our rights—these are some of the ways in which we display our insecurity. A demanding attitude towards society, the expectation that everything will be done for us, looking for love and giving no return, are more childish techniques of seeking self-protection. Another method is extreme adaptation, conformity to type, developing the sort of personality one can "sell" to other people.

The results of frustration

The main point is that modern mass society does not give the majority of people the chance to develop themselves properly, with the result that their personalities tend to become distorted in one or other of two directions, or, indeed, in both. Either there is inflamed egotism, assertion and aggression, or else people display an extreme willingness to follow the herd, to take the line of least resistance. Both tendencies may show themselves in one person who schemes to order other people about in a routine and orthodox way, or in another who, having adapted himself to social requirements, remains a tyrant in the house. All these different ways in which we respond to the frustration of mass society have been ably described by Lewis Way in a book called *Man's Quest for Significance;* and the names of one or two more books which make the same point are given on page 17.

If this is true, then we can understand why it is that the dissatisfactions which attend competition in a de-personalized society should drive us to mass enjoyments. In the cinema we are distracted from our uneasiness and we feel the warmth of human contact—the contact of a lot of other people feeling the same way as we are. At a football match, at the dogs, at the dirt-track, we can feel at one with the rest of the crowd, or, even better, at one with the supporters of one side against the supporters of the other.

And there are less obvious satisfactions, too. There is the day-dream value of the pictures, and the vicarious aggressiveness of the game. In watching a football match, for example, we can express the aggressiveness which is generated by our frustrations in other areas of our lives and work. Besides which, sports and pictures give us something to talk about, so that by attending the match, by going to the pictures, by reading the back page of the evening paper, we acquire the material for conversation which will bring us into some kind of contact with other people.

There is, however, a more sinister possibility. If people find satisfaction in working for a cause, and if they find some solace for their loneliness in mass behaviour, will they not fall an easy prey to the lures of a dictator or a party which will promise them what they would like to have, and give them what they want? A government or a dictator may also be tempted to secure the allegiance of the anonymous masses by offering them a name to uphold, and an escape from the frustrations of their competitive existence. Other classes, other races, other nations are presented as enemies or potential enemies, whose threats consolidate the group and make all members of it conscious of their value and importance.

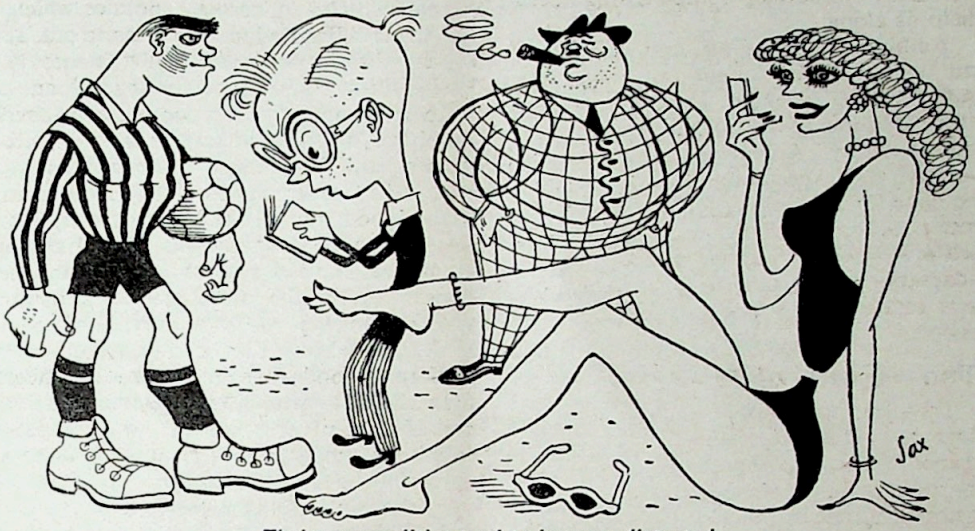
So far we have considered mass society from two angles: its scale and its effect on the individual. There is, however, a third aspect. In every society there are some things which have no immediate usefulness, but which are sought after for their own sake. Decoration of some kind is found in practically every community, however primitive. In our civilization there are many such things: pictures, sculpture, music, beautiful buildings, poems, plays and other literary productions. We have inherited a respect for learning and for the works of the human intellect which is independent of their use-value. But besides works of art and intellect, and far more important, there are moral values as well.

3. Change of values

The problem of standards, therefore, can be considered under two headings.

A. Artistic and intellectual

It is often argued that there is a danger of a levelling down of standards. The "masses" have money to spend and the providers of entertainment will aim at the largest box-office receipts. In the interests of "fairness" the "masses" must be catered for before the sophisticated: if anything has to be cut off, let it be the Third Programme. Decisions about the provision of public art—buildings and art-



Their personalities tend to become distorted

galleries—will be in the hands of elected representatives, and they must please the electorate.

There is something in these arguments. It is true that the " masses " may be said to respond to an immediate superficial appeal and that the greater works of art require knowledge and experience for their appreciation. It is also true that the " masses " have more say in what is put before them than they have had hitherto, whether as paying consumers, or as people who have to be considered by public authorities.

For all that, gloomy prognostications can be overdone. The sophisticated critic still has prestige. To put it at its lowest, there is a general acceptance of the view that there is something called " Art " which is somehow or other respectable and ought to be preserved and encouraged—however silly and unintelligible it may seem to be. This is indeed to put it at its " lowest ". Actually there is evidence of increasing interest in art and music on the part of the " masses ". The world of music has been opened to many who would have had no chance of entering it years ago.

The most important cause of this development is, of course, the wireless. We have all heard the cries of indignation about " chamber music ", and the demands for more variety and " swing ", and doubtless the majority would echo such cries, and back up such demands. But at the same time many who would never have thought of going to concerts have had their " natural " tastes awakened to a pleasure they might never have come across, and certainly even more have had an already developed taste for music made deeper and more rewarding. Furthermore, this group is likely to increase in size as the teaching of music appreciation becomes more effective.

If it be said that these are but a few, a poor " leaven " of the " mass ", there is still something to be said for those who prefer " Variety ". No one can deny them taste, at least within the limits of this form of entertainment. And what of the pleasure of the eye? Even in the cinema, a target for abuse, the " masses " are not without standards, standards of photography, of story presentation, and of acting; but the confirmed habit of cinema-going prevents their discrimination having any effect on what the industry provides for them.

Paintings, perhaps, still affect relatively few people, but the beauties of nature and of architecture are brought within reach of many more people today with the development of road transport. The masses are accused of fouling the countryside and preferring the holiday camp and the crowded resort. It is said that our unplanned cities stretch tentacles of ribbon-development into the countryside. All this is true, but it is not the whole truth. Again, people who do find they enjoy natural beauty and architectural beauty, but who would never have had a chance to make the discovery, now have that chance, and take it.

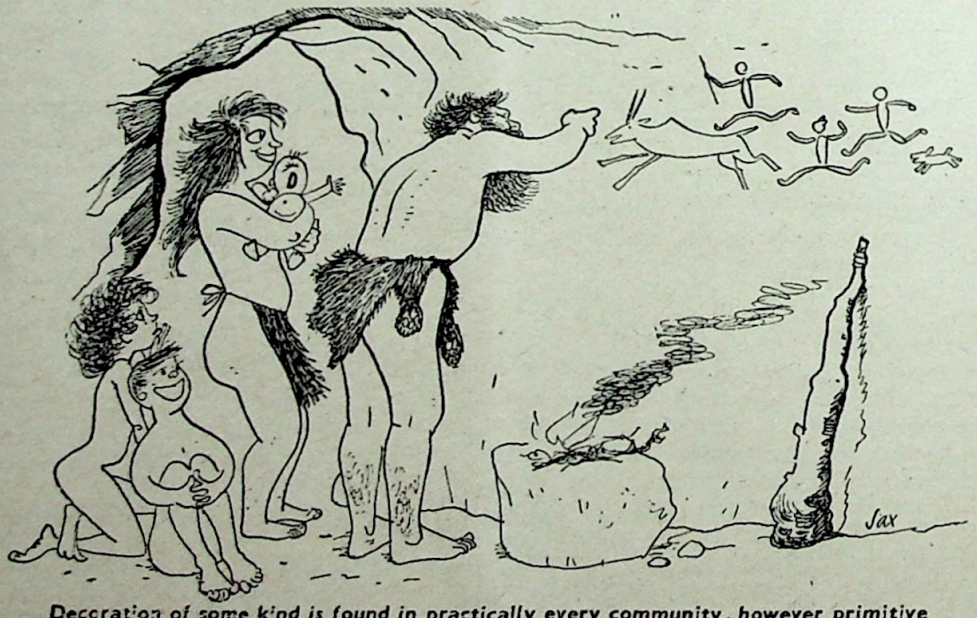
The sophisticated visitor to one of our great architectural monuments may find himself resentful of the crowd, and contemptuous of their inept remarks. Of course they are inept. It takes some time for the influence of a life spent in the midst of hideousness to wear off, but no one who has any experience of such things can deny that the " masses " are enjoying looking at what they came out to see.

But if this, too, is called special pleading, yet another point may be made. The masses who move from town to town, on their visits to football matches and the like, cannot help noticing the difference between one town and another, and experience of variety is one of the most important factors in the development of taste. If you never see anything outside your own city you do not know what else is possible.

All this is evidence of an increased interest in things artistic, but the problem of developing a more discriminating taste, increased sensibility, and a readiness to try new æsthetic experiences has not yet been tackled. The difficulty is that the democratic notion of the equality of persons is dangerous if it means the equality of opinions about art, however ill-informed they may be. This is the artistic aspect of the problem of authority and freedom which is always the central problem of the establishment of standards.

Intellectual standards are more complicated. So far as official education is concerned, it is argued that in the interest of " fairness " the Universities ought to be open to an ever widening range of young people, that they will not have had the advantage of " cultured " homes, and that therefore the standards will have to be tempered to meet their requirements. There is something in that aspect, too, but the danger can be exaggerated. The " masses " themselves have a respect for learning ; the danger lies in the provision of second-rate teaching in the modern secondary schools. If it gets about that children who attend modern secondary schools are less worthy than the ones who attend grammar schools, and if they never come in contact with the courteous modesty of the scholar, they will naturally be forced to take the line that " scholarship is bunk " in self-defence.

A more serious danger is the deliberate exploitation of mental idleness. Thinking and following complicated arguments are not easy, and imitation thinking often takes their place. If we want to believe something, it is only too easy to find, or accept, what appear to be " reasons " for doing so. The truth is often unpalatable, while a falsity, dolled up to look like reasoned truth, may have an appeal. Both Hitler and Mussolini had a contempt for the " masses ", and the democratic com-



Decoration of some kind is found in practically every community, however primitive

munities can hardly be accused of excessive encouragement of independent thought.

Such manipulation of the unsophisticated is the real danger. The "masses" themselves will "fall for" the emotionally-toned superficialities, which fit in with their immediate feelings—and who wouldn't—but they are quite capable of recognizing the genuine article—however obscure—if they are allowed to meet it.

B. Moral values

Moral values present a far more complex problem than that posed by æsthetic and intellectual standards. A view often put forward is that the tradition of the past has lost its hold, morality is undermined, and only a revival of the ancient sanctions will prevent complete collapse. We are, so it is said, living on the dwindling moral capital accumulated by our ancestors. It is true that tradition has lost its hold, and that we are thrown back more on our own moral choices in a world of conflicting opinions, but before we join the chorus of condemnation there are one or two points to be considered.

Let us distinguish two main moral problems: our duty towards other persons and our duty towards the community as a whole. Such a distinction is not a clear-cut one because it might be argued that our duty towards our neighbour includes both other persons individually and other persons collectively, but for all that the distinction is useful.

So far as our duty towards other persons is concerned, we are faced with a large crime rate: juveniles and young persons breaking and entering, parents neglecting their children, "fiddling" and "knocking off" right and left. We cannot afford to be complacent, but such conduct is characteristic of a relatively small proportion of the population, and it is very misleading to compare the bare figures of the present with those of the past. It is true that "broken homes" are responsible for a great deal of juvenile delinquency, but can we be sure that there were not as high a proportion of unhappy homes in the past?

Comparisons of this kind are worthless, because of the lack of evidence. We must, however, admit that home life is not as uniformly good as it might be, that some parents have distractions which interfere with the proper care of their children. It may also be true that quarrels and temptations, which a more rigid tradition would have controlled, are allowed to come out into the open to the detriment of home life. Shortage of supply and the opportunity of a black market offer temptations which the absence of a strong and uniform public opinion makes it difficult to resist. There is plenty to complain about, but all is by no means lost. It may in fact be argued that general standards of child-care have gone up. We have already drawn attention to a general concern with social justice.

Finally we might reflect upon a more general consideration: the tradition sanctioned by religion which we think of as ordering the lives of our forebears, backed as it was by a uniform public opinion, was to a certain extent an external command. Authority made the rules, you knew that the eyes of your small community were on you, and you accepted the situation; that's what life was. Is it not, we might ask, something of an advance that moral principles should be internalized, should come from within? The question, "Why should I . . .?" may all too often lead to a triumph of selfishness, which the command: "Thou shalt not . . ." might have prevented; but it is not always so. The old tradition was appropriate to the old structure. The new structure must develop its own tradition and in the changeover individual moral judgments may have to be relied on, without the backing of an accepted social code.

Development of self-discipline

Doubtless there will be many whose self-control will prove deficient, but that is no reason for despair. It has sometimes happened that a park has been opened to a public unused to such amenities; the immediate result is destruction and litter, but after a while it is not unknown for the "masses" to take a pride in their new possession. Why should such a spread of respect for other people's interests not develop on a wider scale when more people realize the *advantages* of decent conduct? This would not be the will of authority from without, but the will of reason from within.

In our moral dealings with other persons, even if we do not know them, the factor of personal sympathy is always potentially present. In our responsibility to the community at large, such a sense of personal sym-

pathy is absent ; we do not really believe in the results of our action in terms of human discomfort. A special problem presents itself. In the past men worked because it was the thing to do or because they enjoyed the creativeness of craftsmanship, or because they feared the sack. Now the tables are turned. An absentee or so, a strike or so, a slacking of effort here or there may not seem much to the persons concerned ; the sum total may mean a great deal of harm to the national economy, but they personally do not seem to be connected with it. Why should they bother ?

Such short-sighted selfishness is partly due to ignorance, of course. In the simple community of the past the economic interdependence of all its members was obvious and no special knowledge or education was required to realize the effects on society of the idle labourer, the negligent farmer and the careless craftsman. But to understand our complex world both knowledge and imagination are needed, and some formal education is essential.

A worker may use machinery made by men he has never known, by processes of which he has slight knowledge. His attitude to this machine may be very different from his attitude to something made by himself or an acquaintance, which he respects for its personal associations and uses with care and restraint. A miner produces coal for people he will never know and so his absenteeism may seem to him an individual matter and such consequences as he can imagine remote and unreal. The "community" is so vague a concept, so "impersonal" an object, that it does not command allegiance.

What is required here is a new sense of duty founded on a clearer understanding. We recognize that we ought not to be cruel and that we ought not to steal. It may be that such duties as these are not as vivid in the minds of everyone as they should be, but they are old and obvious rules. The duty of responsibility to the community was doubtless part of the equipment of the ruling classes in the past, but the " masses " were not directly concerned with it ; provided they kept their traditional rules the community would in fact be served. Now we require the " masses " to adopt a moral motion which is entirely new to them. That is why in " mass society " at the present the duty towards the community is of paramount importance. It may sound a callous statement, but is it not true that a theft here and a murder there do not cause so much social damage as a parcel of young men going to the " dogs " when they " ought " to be turning coal ?

This is not to condone murder and theft. The point is that everybody knows that murder and theft are " wrong", and even the " wide " feel they have to put up a case when they prey on the " mugs". But when it comes to, say, absenteeism, the position is different. Shame about that is not obvious and widespread, it needs a new orientation to our obligations ; it means an attitude towards the welfare of the community which is like the feeling most of us have about our obligations to the other member of some small-scale society to which we may belong. The absentee may very well feel shocked at the idea of not turning up at a football match in which he is to play, but he does not feel the same about the community as he does about his football club.

4.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The first thing that has to be done is to discuss the social structure for which we are trying to make prescriptions. An attempt has been made to underline the special dangers and problems that confront " mass society ". What follows is a collection of suggested remedies which a discussion group can enlarge on.

A. Combating loneliness

It has been shown that the large-scale organization of today leads to bureaucracy and impersonal relationships. Can we counteract this, somewhat, by developing smaller units? Is it possible to lessen the sense of loneliness by encouraging smaller "neighbourhood units" in our cities? Community centres may also do much more than cater for leisure interests. They can provide the friendliness and the sense of belonging that human beings need and so often miss in modern society. But if they are confined to one income group or social class, as is the case in many suburbs and housing estates, is not their influence narrow and the "community" an unrepresentative fraction?

Is it possible to make workmen feel they matter as much as in fact they do by introducing personnel management into large-scale factories, or by such devices as joint consultation? Some large firms have experimented with frank explanations to the workers of the whole economic and financial policy of the firm, in the belief that taking the workers "behind the scenes" will give them a better understanding of their functions and responsibilities. This raises new problems, such as the technique of explanation, the rôle of the management under such conditions, the rôle of the trades union and workers' representatives.

B. Choosing our leaders

In the past it was those of high rank or great wealth who were the managers of the economic system of the country, the political leaders, and those responsible for the setting of standards.

It is admitted that they accepted as right and proper a fixed and low standard for the "masses", and such a limitation is unthinkable today. They did, however, not wholly ignobly act as leaders. They brought to their task usually a liberal education obtained at the Public Schools and Universities or a technical knowledge acquired by practical experience of trade and industry.

In the economic field a new class is now attaining key positions. For those men who direct large-scale organizations, technical development in industry, or the growing public services, the old qualifications of hereditary status and ownership become less important than technical knowledge and high administrative capacity. This new "managerial" class does not consist of mere technologists. In all organizations people have to be managed, coaxed, persuaded and inspired. With each enlargement of the organization, this task of co-ordinating efforts and harmonizing views grows in difficulty and delicacy. The difficulty increases when representative bodies have to be satisfied or employees given a voice in management.

The engineer, the chemist, the regional director of the Coal Board must all be diplomats and politicians (in the best sense of these words) as well as technologists, if they are to run large-scale undertakings. They need also, as all persons in power need, if they are to resist its inevitable temptations, a sense of public duty that over-rides those private and sectional interests which do not conveniently disappear when industries are State-owned or regulated, or when a committee of laymen ostensibly controls but may in fact be directed by the expert "manager" whom it employs.

Now that we have widened greatly the field from which the "managerial" class is recruited, Plato's problem of how to produce the king who is also a philosopher takes on new forms. What sort of general education should be given to the specialist? What does the engineer need beside his engineering? Is the study of history a waste of time for chemists? Should the study of Greek and Roman civilization continue to have an important place in the education of administrators? Is the student of history or classics able to apply himself effectively to the modern problems of administration if he is ignorant of science or economics?

When we turn to the field of political leadership we meet similar problems. The privileged class which formerly held these positions was highly educated and influenced by the aristocratic and Christian traditions. Because their social position was secure, they were more interested in prestige than power and they did not need to be good orators or attractive public personalities, though these things helped.

Nowadays political leaders must be attractive to the masses, and the radio and the Press have almost succeeded in making public oratory the most important qualification for political leadership. Many of our present-day political leaders have risen by their own

efforts, unassisted by educational and social advantages, and such struggles do produce men of character with a wide range of sympathies. On the other hand such competition may also produce power-mongers and careerists intent on consolidating their position in the new élite by unscrupulous manipulation of mass-support won by oratory and promises.

It is possible, as Burnham argues in the *Managerial Revolution*, that we are exchanging the old class system, with its merits as well as its defects, for a new division between "managers" and "masses". The education of managers is thus of the greatest importance and this will be largely the concern of secondary and University education. The way in which the quality of educational opportunity works out will also very much affect the kind of persons who become leaders. Some trade unions have already appointed as secretaries persons who have never been in the industry, nor elected by the rank and file, but who are qualified experts in administration. Is this the beginning of a "managerial" class in the trade unions?

C. Establishing new standards

The chief problem of mass society is how to develop a new sense of responsibility to society. The first requirement is therefore some understanding of present society and its difficulties, and this is an educational problem. It is not merely a question of more education but of what kind of curriculum and what sort of methods.

Some say that the present curriculum lacks unity and relevance to life; that we should, for instance, do "social studies" instead of history and geography separately. By this is meant taking present-day society as the starting point and finding out how people live, what they do, how their activities are related, and what causes society to change. History and geography will come in, of course, but only to help us to understand how the agricultural communities of the Middle Ages have changed into the mass society of today. Literature would be studied not merely as an art or the expression of great personalities, but also to show us what people thought and felt about life in different times and countries. Science, too, it is suggested, must be linked with social studies and literature, because scientific technology influences the way people live, and scientific ideas influence their conduct and beliefs.

For example, one of the most important events in the nineteenth century was the invention of the Bessemer steel process which made armour-plating cheap. Again, for instance, the notion of "the survival of the fittest", which made Tennyson so unhappy, leads directly to Hitler's beliefs in the cultural superiority of Germans and the moral superiority of leaders and all the terrible consequences when Bessemer steel was used to enforce these beliefs. So history, science and literature combine to help us to understand our world, and should not be studied out of relation with one another, as they frequently are at present.

Another criticism, made in the Norwood Report, is that our education does not make us comprehend and express ourselves well enough, so that both our understanding of others and our power to put our point of view is hampered—and there are plenty of people about who will take advantage of these weaknesses. Then the study of the visual image in posters, pictures, cartoons and films is greatly neglected in our education, yet every day we are subjected to countless visual images which, almost unconsciously, stir our feelings and establish attitudes and prejudices.

But, supposing that reform of the curriculum ensured that we were much more aware of what is really going on in the world, would this knowledge make us more ready to do our duty in it? We may understand quite well the need for everyone to work harder and spend less and yet we dodge the extra work because half the pay goes in income-tax. Only a personal sense of duty will nerve us to this act of self-sacrifice. How can education develop this sense of duty?

Some say we want more discipline; that children are spoilt nowadays. But if by discipline is meant merely austerity and obedience, is it likely to produce a personal sense of duty which will operate in adult life when parent and teacher no longer threaten and the moral tradition is no longer powerful? The problem for school and home is how to make an externally imposed discipline gradually develop into self-discipline. Some say this can be done by giving more freedom and responsibility to young people. Some say schools must be more democratic and less authoritarian in teaching methods if they are

to develop a strong sense of social co-operation. Then, even if the school does its work, will the home and the street defeat the work of the school?

In the end, therefore, we must ask the question whether a merely rational understanding of our obligations is enough to make us responsible and dutiful. There are those who say that only a transcendent ideal, about which we feel passionately, can give us the moral energy for self-sacrificing devotion, and that training and knowledge without this foundation of belief cannot establish a new moral tradition. If they are right, what is the form of this transcendent ideal? Is it to be a revival of Christian faith, or Communism, or Nationalism? Or have we to wait for a new religion?

FOR FURTHER READING

For General Reading

Jeffreys, M. V. C. *Education, Christian or Pagan.* (University of London Press, 1946, 4/-.)
Marchant, Sir James. *Rebuilding Family Life in the Post-War World**. (Odhams, 1945.)
Reeves, M. *Growing Up in a Modern Society.* (University of London Press, 1946, 5/-.)
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More Advanced

Crawshay-Williams, R. *The Comforts of Unreason.* (Kegan Paul, 1947, 12/6.)
Fromm, E. *The Fear of Freedom.* (Kegan Paul, 1942, reprinting, 15/-.)
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Mannheim, K. *Diagnosis of Our Time.* (Kegan Paul, 1943, 10/6.)
Massingham, H. J. *English Countryman : a Study of the English Tradition.** (Batsford, 1942.)
Mumford, Lewis. *The Culture of Cities.* (Secker and Warburg, 1940, 16/-.)
Popper, K. *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 2 vols. (Kegan Paul, 1945, reprinting, 42/-.)
Russell, Bertrand. *Authority and the Individual.* (Allen and Unwin, 1949, 6/-.)
Way, Lewis. *Man's Quest for Significance.* (Allen and Unwin, 1948, 12/6.)
Young, K. *Handbook of Social Psychology*, Part III. (Kegan Paul, 1946, 12/-.)

* Out of print, but should be obtainable from libraries.

NOTES FOR DISCUSSION ★

Whatever your group or whatever your treatment of this subject of living in crowds, the main structure of the discussion seems bound to be on these lines :

1. ***The fact that we live in a mass society.***
2. ***The consequences of life in a mass society.***
3. ***Can, and should, anything be done about it?***

The other simple matter is that this is clearly a subject for discussion throughout ; at no point should you need to hold the floor yourself and disgorge facts and figures.

But having said that much, one must add that this is not necessarily an easy topic with all groups. It may be that the members of your group are the kind of people who have given a good deal of thought to the world in which they live, who are worried about mass-production and mass living. In this event the discussion will not be hard, and it will provide an opportunity for them to put their thoughts in order and above all to think out, under heading 3, what can be done.

The need for tact treatment

More probably, however, your group will contain only a few such people, if any ; it will more probably be made up of people who to a great extent accept the kind of society in which they live and who have not worried themselves about its social implications. In this event, your main task would be to concentrate on the first two sections, and to set them thinking along unfamiliar paths. What is more, your prompting will need to be gentle and tactful : if there are disagreeable sights to be seen or conclusions drawn, the group must do it and not you or it will become yourself versus the rest.

As a start, you might well take the examples of our mass society given at the bottom of page 3 (Wembley Stadium, I.C.I. and the rest) and invite the group at once to say what they reveal, what they have in common. Get the group talking about " crowds they have known " and crowd behaviour. If any of them come (or have come) from the country, you could make the comparison with the village way of life. It is then, the fact of crowds being accepted, time to dig down and ask for the consequences. It may help if you suggest directions in which to look (e.g. the three problems of part 3). The method will be to ask leading questions, drop hints, so that the group moves on steadily and *thinks for itself.*

For above all this topic is an occasion for thought and for a very honest weighing of gains and losses. After all, it is the quality of our society and our lives which is involved.

★ *Having tried out the discussion and teaching notes in the form of a loose page, we are now returning to the old arrangement. The experiment has been appreciated as revealing a commendable wish on our part to be helpful to the teacher. But the verdict seems to be that the loose page is really more trouble than it is worth : it gets lost, it can't be found when wanted, and so on. And so we are returning it to the body of the pamphlet, though retaining the distinction between notes for the discussion-leader and notes for the teacher.*

FOR THE TEACHER

The authors of this pamphlet have attempted to break down the subject into separate themes few of which, as they stand, would furnish adequate material for the classroom. With younger children anyway the teacher's task will be to translate the problem from the philosophical to the material plane. We do not suggest that the difficulty of doing this should cause the subject of mass society to be by-passed, because the problems inherent in it are just as vital to the child as to the adult.

For senior pupils the historical background showing the growth of mass society might constitute a separate introduction occupying one or more lessons.

A Classroom Inquiry

One way of helping children to become aware of the size and uniformity of mass society is to ask a series of questions whose answers suggest these two attributes. A questionnaire (written or oral answers depending on the ability of the pupils), covering leisure activities (What papers do you read at home? What do you do on Saturday afternoon? What is your favourite wireless programme? etc.), and domestic life (Where does your Mother get her groceries? Who supplies your milk? etc.), can be put to the class. The questions will vary, of course, according to the location of the school. The children themselves may be able to grade the information given, and a comparison can then be made with national figures, e.g., 16 of us read the *Daily* ——, 3,000,000 people in the country read it. Mere figures by themselves are perhaps plausible but require further substantiation.

Teaching without Preaching

The next step in this study of mass society involves the difficulty of exposing the good and bad without undue moralizing. The advantages bestowed by a well-run local authority will already be known from studies of Civics and Citizenship. But how can we convey the individual's responsibility to the big community? Again, comparisons between things known and regularly experienced may convey the lesson to be learnt. Is litter dropped in the classrooms and playground? Why not? What about the public parks at the end of a sunny week-end? Why is there a different standard of behaviour in these two examples? Are there any good local community activities, e.g., Savings?

Perhaps a ten minute class room dramatization involving such characters as Master Don't Care, Master Keen, Policeman, Club Leader, Mother, Outraged Lady, might illustrate in lighter vein individual standards of behaviour and why they matter.

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